

Emergency Communications Forum

Coordination Key to Yuma Region's Efforts to Enhance Interoperable Communications on the Border

On May 2, 2011, US Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano announced \$25.5 million in grant funding under the Border Interoperability Demonstration Project (BIDP)—a one-time competitive grant program focused on developing innovative solutions to strengthen interoperable emergency communications along the U.S. borders with Canada and Mexico. The Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) was authorized to conduct this grant program to test approaches that involve new technology or an innovative approach to governance, planning, coordination, training, and exercises.

One of the seven projects selected was the Yuma Full Voice and Data Integration Demonstration Project, which will test a new approach to providing voice and data communications interoperability between Federal, State, local, and tribal governments in the Yuma region. The project was selected to receive \$3,994,443.

Specifically, the project will establish direct connectivity between the Arizona State Emergency Operations Center and the Sonora, Mexico Center for Control, Command, Communications, and Computers. Benefits to Yuma area public safety agencies will include improved communications interoperability and the ability to share incident and criminal information with international partners.

In total, 17 federal, state, local, and tribal agencies are part of the Yuma Full Voice and Data Integration Demonstration Project. Emergency communications personnel and government officials cite the value of existing partnerships in the Yuma region as key to their efforts to strengthen communications capabilities.

"The Public Safety agencies at the federal, state, and local level along with our two Indian tribes in the Yuma area have been working hand in hand for many years. This partnership has brought many successes and solid security for our region, even though we are located on the border. Our working relationships have been recognized as a model for cooperation and how to do get it done. "Win - win" is not just a saying but it is a practice in the Yuma County area," said Yuma City Administrator Greg Wilkinson.

"The BIDP award and demonstration will build on our success and will provide us an even closer relationship with our interoperability partners with more timely and better information exchanged with voice, video, and data communications for all levels of first responders," Wilkinson continued.

OEC will be working with the seven selected communities over the next three years to monitor the projects' progress, provide technical assistance, identify effective solutions and best practices, and disseminate lessons learned to all interested parties. A key long term goal of the program is to implement successful demonstration projects that will generate best practices and serve as repeatable models for communities with similar communications needs.

For more information about BIDP and selected projects, please visit the [BIDP website](#).

Yuma Full Voice and Data Integration Demonstration Project Participants

City of Yuma
Yuma County Sheriff's Office
Yuma County Office of Emergency Management
Cocopah Police Department
City of San Luis
Somerton/Cocopah Fire Department
Quechan Tribal Police Department
Town of Welton
Arizona Department of Public Safety
Arizona Department of Transportation
Marine Corps Air Station-Yuma
US Army – Yuma Proving Ground
US Customs and Border Patrol – Yuma Sector
US Marshal's Office – Yuma
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms – Yuma
Federal Bureau of Investigation – Yuma
Drug Enforcement Agency – Yuma